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The African Violet Magazine

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THE AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE

The African Violet Magazine

Published By

The African Violet Society
of America, Inc.

Vol. 1, No. 4

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If you have had any unusual or interesting experiences in growing St. Paulias, the Staff invites you to write an article for publication in the magazine.

DUES

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COVER DESIGN: PURPLE BEAUTY

Purple Beauty has dark shining green foliage somewhat similar to the foliage of Neptune though it has a more pointed leaf, and is not quite as quilted.

It is as a rule flat growing and has huge blue-violet blossoms produced in clusters of 4-8 just at the top of the foliage. A heavy bloomer the bell shaped blossoms give the plant the appearance of a beautiful violet corsage.

MANY THANKS MR. CHARD.

Through an oversight the name of Mr. Arthur Chard was omitted from the illustration of the Glas-Wik watering article by Ethel T. Crisp in Volume I Number III. The Staff wishes to express their special thanks to Mr. Chard for his contribution and for so generously sharing his talent at other times.

The Presidents Message

We Meet Again

Your Second Annual Convention has just been held. A notice of it, including a tentative schedule of events was sent all members of the Society. We sincerely hope many of you were able to attend. Cincinnati, Ohio was the Convention City this time. Thanks to our stalwart member in Cincinnati, Mrs. Arthur Radtke, the Cincinnati Club in that fine city was the location where all events of the Convention were staged.

A large number of you who could not attend entrusted three of your officers with your proxies. Certainly we pledge each one of you who did this that we used our very best judgment, and exercised every reasonable care in thus representing you in the considerations and actions that were taken at the Annual Business Meeting on May 22. The Sept. issue of the Magazine will bring you a faithful report on the action taken at this meeting and also the other interesting events of the Convention.

By the time you read this message our Membership Roll will have reached the 1,200 mark. It is already well over 1,000 in number. Many of you responded generously, I know, to the suggestion in my last message that each member at that time secure one or more of their interested friends to join the Society. Let us continue this effective recruiting mission until our mutual efforts have reached clear around the ever widening circle of enthusiastic African Violet growers throughout the Country.

My last message to you mentioned the pressing need for the Society to set up a Committee on Registration to work side-by-side with our Classification Committee in working out and setting in motion a sound plan through which the known varieties and species of African Violets can be properly registered, by name, with the Society. The great need for this kind of constructive program, to operate in the prevention of duplication of both names and varieties, has become more apparent. This action was one of the main additions to our program considered at the convention in Cincinnati.

Please always feel free to write any or all of your officers and Committee chairmen your suggestions as to how the Society can improve its services. Your suggestions will be sincerely appreciated.

Cordially,

Your President,

Mrs. O. E. Keller

AFRICAN VIOLET STILL QUEEN OF INDOOR PLANTS

BY MRS. GEORGE F. PENDLETON

From a Handbook for African Violet
Growers by Mary Margaret Odom

There Are Various Ways of Handling
"the Violet That Is Not a Violet," but
Here Is the Practice of a Kansas City
Gardener in Her Hobby.

(Mrs. Pendleton has written before on the African Violet, but now brings growers up to date on her practices. "There are many successful ways of raising African Violets, perhaps all equally good," she comments, "here I shall tell you the way I raise mine, not as a commercial grower, but as a housewife with a hobby.")

Of course you know the African violet, or Saintpaulia, is really not a violet. It was named for Baron Walter von St. Paul, who discovered it in East Africa in 1890. It was found in wooded areas in limestone, in humid forests among granite rock, under waterfall ledges and in the shade of the undergrowth. This gives one a fair insight into what the African violet likes in the way of light and moisture.

The African violet belongs to the gesneria family, in which the color yellow does not occur, so it has been said, therefore, that there could never be a yellow saintpaulia. But some of the side branches of the gesneria family do carry yellow, and with so many interested persons working feverishly in cross pollination we may yet have one.

African violets are not hard to raise if one understands their few requirements. In the winter they can bask for a short time in the early morning sun, preferably, a few feet from an east window. The remainder of the day they require good protection from direct sunlight but reveal in all possible light a room affords. It matters not from which direction the light comes the remainder of the day so long as the direct rays of the sun do not strike the plant. Light and good light makes strong, sturdy plants.

Early fall is the preferred time for transplanting.

They Knew Warm Rains.

Watering seems to be the greatest bugaboo for most people. Experience alone can solve that problem and once one acquires the knack, it is anything but difficult. Always keep the water tepid so as not to shock them out of several months' growth. I water from below, not that I think it cannot be done from above, but why run the risk of causing crown rot? If the topsoil is damp the water has distributed itself all through the soil.

When the topsoil is no longer damp the plant needs water again. Most of my pots are the 3-inch size, and under each one I place a small glass sauce dish. I find that about one-fourth cup of water is sufficient for each watering. Always water in the morning as the temperature rises.



Photo by Ross Hahn

Double Duchess

Only occasionally do I set the pots on wet sand or gravel, for sooner or later plants so treated may acquire too much moisture and eventually rot, especially in hot, damp weather. I find this method an open road to trouble.

It makes no difference how much water gets on the leaves so long as the sun does not shine on them while wet. In fact, a shower is often beneficial.

When Leaves Fall.

It is perfectly natural for a matured plant to shed a few of its lower leaves, especially in summer. If it loses a large number the plant probably is getting too much water. An African violet does not grow up out of the soil, but stays where you put it. It does grow up from above the soil and as it sheds its leaves it develops a long bent stem. The top may be broken off and re-rooted to form a new plant, but a still better plant results from the propagation of a new leaf.

Soil is important, and yet one does not actually need to measure it cup for cup. Roughly speaking, a light soil with plenty of humus and a little sand is all the African violet needs. But here, for those who wish to know, are the proportions I use: three parts good garden loam, three parts humus in the form of leaf mold with some well rotted cow manure and peat-moss added; one part sand and a teaspoon of bonemeal to each 3-inch pot. I sift this through a 1/4-inch wire mesh. Anything finer makes the soil too fine and compact for the very small roots to penetrate easily. Leafmold from under a privet hedge and woods soil are excellent.

I place a bit of spagnum moss over the hole of the pot just to keep the soil from sifting through. It also serves slightly in maintaining moisture. I do not use broken pottery in the bottom as it hinders absorption of the water in the sauce dish.

Feeding is not absolutely necessary if the soil is excellent, but it does produce larger and better flowers with good color. Any well balanced fertilizer is adequate. Use one level teaspoon to a quart of water in the sauce dish in the same manner as for watering. Weak manure tea is always good. According to many authorities B-1 is of no value. Feeding every three weeks is ample.

A 15-Degree Range.

The ideal temperature for African violets is between 60 degrees and 75 degrees. Temperatures lower than 60 degrees will cause the plants to stop growth. A white, narrow line around the edge of a leaf or curling of the leaf are often the result of being too cold. Temperatures higher than 75 degrees, because of heat and dryness, cause the buds to drop or flowers to wilt. Many plants kept together will tend to form moisture to counteract this condition.

Ordinarily African violets are free from diseases. The most common pest is the white, woolly, mealy bug, which looks like a bit of cotton sprinkled over the plant. To eradicate it wrap a piece of cotton on the end of a toothpick dipped in alcohol and touch each bug with it.

If the plant curls in the center and the buds seem unable to entangle themselves you probably have cyclamen mite, so you might as well destroy your plant, as this mite is extremely difficult to treat.

African violets are easy to propagate from leaf cuttings. The best time for this

is early spring. The most important step is knowing how to choose the best leaves to use. Do not choose the large, oldest ones lying on the rim of the pot. The very youngest are not the best either, but are preferable to the oldest. It is the intermediate leaf that has life and vitality that almost always propagates.

I like placing a leaf in a small tumbler of water or a wide-mouthed bottle, one that holds the leaf up and keeps the end of the stem from touching the bottom. Some people fasten a piece of waxed paper or place a cardboard over a tumbler, and then insert the leaf through a hole made in it. For just a few leaves this works fine.

Into Sand and Peat

When the roots are about an inch long and before the little plants have been started, I take them out of the water and place them in half peat moss, heavily impregnated with vermiculite (the latter encourages a good root system). I put this mixture in clay bulb pans (flat flower pots) eight or ten inches in diameter. In the center of the pan I sink a 2½ or 3-inch, corked flower pot up to the rim and keep it filled with water, which gradually seeps through the porous pot and distributes the moisture more evenly than bottom or top watering. At times this method does not furnish enough moisture so more must be added to the surface of the sand as it must be kept damp at all times but not soaked.

When the little plants have become fair size, about one or one and one-half inches high, I remove the cluster, parent leaf and all, with a fork, shake off the excess sand mixture, but not too much, as the mass of roots should not be disturbed. I then plant the entire cluster in

the prepared soil in a 3-inch pot. When the cluster has almost doubled its size I divide and put each little plant in a pot of its own. By then each plant has an excellent root system and does not mind the tearing apart at all. When there are a few very small plants in the cluster I either pot them in smaller pots or put them back in the sand to grow until large enough for the 3-inch pot. I usually leave the parent leaf on until this last transplanting unless it is hindering the development of the small plants or is deteriorating itself.



Photo by Ross Hahn

Red Head Girl

AFRICAN VIOLET STILL QUEEN OF INDOOR PLANTS.

I like a rather long stem for rooting so the leaf will not hinder the development of the small plants by shutting off light. A leaf with no stem at all is unsatisfactory because although small plants result, they grow up spindly because of lack of light from one side.

I have learned that leaves growing uncovered raise much sturdier plants. The only time I cover with glass is when I have a weak leaf inclined to wilt or one with a few roots that I am transferring from water to sand. I may cover these with a glass for several days as that seems to be sufficient to put them on their own.

Plants bloom much better when planted singly. They do not grow well in too small a pot when root-bound or in two large a pot, as there are not roots enough to use up the moisture readily, and crown rot may follow.

A Short Life Span.

The life of an African violet is not long, a plant 1 or 2 years old being at its prime. Plants 3 or more years old are not desirable to me.

There are so many varieties now that it is almost impossible to describe them all. Blue Boy, Blue Girl, Pink Beauty and White Lady are considered standard. Blue Girl is extremely popular because of its beautiful, deeply-scalloped edge and white triangle at the base of the leaf. We are now getting Pink Girl, Orchid Girl, Red Head Girl and Variegated Blue Girl, all with the same, deeply scalloped edge. Besides the new variegated leafed ones, we have several doubles, such as Double Orchid Beauty, Double Russian (flowers quite double), Double Blue Boy and Double Duchess, which I understand is the same as Double Blue Boy. Mine have not yet bloomed, so I do not speak from experience.

The Duponts perhaps are the most gorgeous of all. They have very thick, large, round, hairy leaves with extra large flowers, but are not so prolific as some varieties. They propagate slowly and sparingly. The lavender pink is especially lovely. There are also several shades of blue. Crinkles, Curley Special, Mrs. Boles, Marine, are much sought after. There are many, many more and even more coming as the propagators are developing hundreds of new seedlings. Maybe that yellow one will show up yet—who knows?

DISTRICT DIRECTORS

The following list of District Directors has been announced for 1948.

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Mrs. R. R. Blackburn,
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Region 4. Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois.

Mrs. Arthur Radtke,
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Region 5. Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.
To be announced later.

Region 6. Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas.

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NEMATODES IN AFRICAN VIOLETS

Alma Wright

Saintpaulia growers in many sections of the country are becoming painfully aware that one of the most serious threats to successful African Violet Culture is the root nematode. These Nematodes are fine thread like parasitic worms which attack the roots of the Violet plant, and cause it to wilt and die. Both the roots and plant stalk are attacked. Plants showing Nematode Symptoms lose their usual dark glossy green color. The foliage becomes pale and dull, and the outer leaves begin to be droopy. Small pulpy nodules or enlargements will be found on the roots, and the stalk will be knotty and spongy. Sometimes watering more frequently will encourage the plant to firm up for a short while, and if a careful search is made live or dead nematodes may be found in the bottom of the dish or jardiniere a heavily infested plant has been kept in. Extra warm water will at times bring them out.

There is at present no known cure for a plant whose root system is infested with nematodes. Thus it is evident that the first thing a violet enthusiast should do when a plant is found to be infested and dying is to destroy it. Do not throw it in the trash or on the humus pile because the nematodes may survive, and find a new host. Destroy

the plant and the soil, and carefully disinfect the pot before using it again. It is said to be possible that nematodes may pass from one pot to another if they are grouped close together on wet sand or gravel. They may also be able to swim in tepid or cold water from pot to pot if kept in a common container.

A plant having crown root rot or root rot may be cut away above the infected part of the stalk and re-rooted either by placing it in a glass of water until it has grown new roots or by re-rooting it in peat moss and vermiculite or some other medium. The same procedure however cannot be followed for a plant infested with nematodes. Re-rooting has proven to be a failure and a waste of time. The plant may be cut back to what appears to be healthy stalk. It may be re-rooted and several weeks pass before the nematodes reappear. Then the plant will most likely begin to have symptoms of the nematodes return. It will gradually lose color and become limp. As a rule the plant stalk which was apparently successfully re-rooted will be a spongy nematode mass, and the short roots again will be quite full of the little bumpy knots used by the nematodes as their home.



Photo by Ross Hahn

Preventing nematode infestation is the best way to get rid of them! Since the presence of nematodes cannot be detected in soil before it is used it is best to plant only in sterilized soil. This includes all types of animal fertilizers commonly added to potting soil which may have had the opportunity of becoming infested. A simple method for home sterilization is to place the soil to be sterilized in a collander or strainer and pour boiling water thru it or it may be baked in the oven for an hour at 200 degrees or higher stirring it from time to time so as to expose as much of the soil as possible to the highest degree of heat. Tobacco dust too has been recommended as checking the growth of nematodes in potting soil. Being used at the rate of one teaspoon to the gallon of good potting soil. A number of easy to use sterilized soil preparations are sold commercially under a variety of trade names. Also on the market are several soil sterilizing preparations which may be applied over a large garden area. Good results are claimed and if these are justified a most important contribution has been made to all home gardeners who have to struggle with Nematodes in their soil.

NEMATODES

By C. J. Hudson, Jr.

There has been much comment within the past year or two about a new menace to practically all types of plant growth which has seriously effected the culture or the plants, both in home gardens and among potted plant groups. This is known as the Root-Knot or Nematode which causes a swollen growth on the roots, making the roots distorted and knotty and causing the ultimate destruction of the plants.

The Nematode which causes all of this trouble is a minute worm that infests many types of soil and it also feeds upon root systems of plants. It is so small that it can easily burrow into the fine root hairs of growing plants and through its feeding action will cause the stoppage of the vessels which carry food from the roots to the plant tops. This swelling will eventually cut off the entire food supply from the root systems resulting in the death of the plants.

Nematode injury is usually determined by the action of the effected plants when they apparently begin to die down as though suffering from lack of moisture although

there is plenty of moisture available to these plants. If such injury is suspected it can be definitely determined by examining the roots for a swollen and knotty condition. Plants that are badly effected can not be treated with any reasonable degree of success but should be destroyed and burned.

There is one definite control for the Nematode, and the nature of treatment depends a great deal upon the amount of soil to be treated. If large amounts are to be treated greenhouse people will usually sterilize the soil with steam, the temperature being high enough to completely destroy the Nematode organisms. Others will use boiling hot water when smaller amounts of soil are to be treated, such as a small quantity which is used for potting plants.

Among the latest and most effective and permanent treatments for Nematode infested soils is that of fumigating the ground with one or the other of the new standard Sul-fumigants. One of these is sold under the name of Dowfume. Both of these methods are very effective and will completely rid the soil of Nematodes for a long period of time. They are both liquids and are injected into the soil so that the liquid will penetrate the entire area and thus kill the Nematodes through the fumes.

As to definite methods of treating soils, it would be wise to contact local state experiment stations where special experiments have been conducted in the treatment of greenhouse soils and also for treatment under out-of-door gardening conditions.

There has been a great deal of discussion recently about a so-called Foliar Nematode which has been said to attack the leaves of African Violets. Leading entomologists have repeatedly discounted the fact that such a type of Nematode exists and say that there is only one type that attacks plants and that is the one just described which attacks only root systems. The remedy suggested for the control of Foliar Nematodes also seemed to be erroneous because the general recommendations were that plants should be sprayed with a copper solution. A copper being a fungicide would have little insecticide value.

Fortunately Nematodes and Root-Knot can be controlled in any of the ways mentioned, and it would pay any African Violet grower to first treat his soil to be definitely sure that these infestations will not occur in his plants.

FUNDAMENTALS IN JUDGING

By: Mrs. Arthur Radtke

This article is being written as a suggestion to those Regional and local African Violet Society Chapters who will soon be staging their own shows. To date, there have been but few flower conventions that have specialized solely in Saintpaulias. The two largest have both been held in Atlanta: Nov. 8-9, 1946 and Oct. 9-10, 1947. The latter of course, you recognize as having been our first annual National affair. Having had the honor bestowed upon me, to officiate in such an important event - I would like to pass on to the public, in my opinion, the most important duties of a judge.

A copy of the schedule should be sent to the judges prior to the show. And the ordinary points of ethics and conduct, as in regular flower contests are observed. A good policy is not to have the names of the judges announced beforehand. As occasionally it is a temptation irresistible to some exhibitors not to 'play up' to preferences of certain judges - should these little whims become known to the public. Tho' the names of the judges should be published afterward and indicates to some extent, the standard of the show. Neither should the judges enter the exhibition room until all details have been completed.

Clerks are assigned to act as assistants to the judges, and they are previously instructed regarding their duties. They should be thoroughly familiar with the rules, schedule, classes and the number of entries in each division. They assume taking messages, opening envelopes, placing either the seals or ribbons, and keep the record of all prize-winners. The clerks are not allowed to exhibit in the classes that they are working with and are not permitted to indicate their choice. The judges, clerks and the chairman of the judges' or of the Flower Show Committee are supposedly to be the only people on the floor while judging is going on.

First, he or she must be fair, unbiased and have absolutely no intimation as to whose entries are being selected. The Show Committee will have so arranged the plants and entrants' names so that they will be unidentifiable until after the judging has been completed. Then, the name of the exhibitor is displayed and the card on the plants winning the merits, will have attached either the seal or ribbon.

Usually a maximum of three ribbons are awarded in each class; an award for the Best plant in the show and one for the Largest. At our National Show there was a Sweepstake prize too, given to the exhibitor winning on the greatest number of points. To further stimulate interest, I advise recording "Honorable Mention" on

the tags of plants that are deserving of this compliment. Or, if plants are barred from competition for my reason, the cause of "Disqualification" should be written on the exhibitor's entry card. To merit a blue ribbon, a plant must be credited with 90 or more points; red ribbon, 80 to 89; and a yellow, at least 70. The decision of the judges should be accepted as final. And, upon completion they are expected to sign their reports before turning them in. It is well to remember too, that Judges do not participate in the giving of awards in any class, where they have their own plant exhibited.

A most confusing factor in judging is the matter of 'crowns'. I was particularly delighted when I learned that the entries of Single-crown and Multiple-crown plants were going to be classified separately. Our first National Show, set a very fair example in having two classes of the latter. Number 9, was composed of "Collections"; the best of 3 to 5 un-named varieties. While number 10, dealt with the "Single Specimen". And the best individual plant of any named or un-named variety was judged for size, symmetry, and quantity of bloom.

In dividing the 100 points for a perfect plant, I believe the figures used at our first National Show are quite fair.

(a) Leaf Pattern	35 points
(b) Quantity of Bloom	20 points
(c) Size of Bloom	10 points
(d) Color	10 points
(e) Condition	25 points

The basis on which ribbons are awarded should, naturally, be announced when entries are invited. On the standard that all single and multiple-crown plants will be kept separate and that the entries are divided into classes of recognizable varieties - the judging becomes comparatively simple.

(a) Leaf pattern is the most important, as this includes plant symmetry.

(b) Quantity of Bloom is easily decided, as in close decisions the open blossoms may be counted.

(c) Size of Blooms is a comparison of the physical dimensions of the flowers.

(d) Color - this may prove a little difficult due to the various exposures that the plants have been growing in, and the kind and amount of fertilizer they have been accustomed to. It is necessary that the judges be thoroughly familiar with the true colors of every established variety.

(e) Condition. This is of utmost importance, second only to leaf pattern. Violets must be carefully examined and only the healthy ones be allowed to compete. Plants that are either infested or diseased are dis-

FUNDAMENTALS IN JUDGING

qualified. Spotted foliage (other than when it is not a variegated plant) can also cause unfavorable comment. But it is for the protection of the exhibitors in general that these inspections are so rigid.

In conclusion, may I make another suggestion to inexperienced, but prospective exhibitors? For best leaf pattern and a symmetrical plant, turn, to promote even growth on all sides. Remove all soft, or browning foliage. And keep your plant fresh by occasionally removing particles of dust via spraying - of course using tepid water. Your plants will love the bath and show their gratitude.

Buds are not considered as flowers, so my parting reminder is to **KEEP YOUR VIOLETS COLORFUL!** For a plant without blooms otherwise perfect, is not worthy of being groomed to be displayed in any flower show. It is with eager anticipation that I shall look forward to the progress of our newly formed Chapters and I hope that the violets entered, with our ever-increasing knowledge, will eventually become perfect specimens.

HINTS ON LEAF PROPAGATION

By Rosa Peters

I have received the second issue of *The African Violet Magazine*, and have found it very interesting and helpful.

As an amateur, I have had wonderful results in propagating leaves, and would like to submit my method to the interested.

I propagate all leaves in 2 inch pots, which are then packed into a large, shallow clay pot. The pots I use hold 12 of the 2 inch pots, but any size pot can be used to fit ones need. A piece of pottery is placed over the drainage of both the large and small pots. The large pot being filled with a coarse sand, and for this I use our Lake Michigan Beach sand, as it keeps the small pots free of any mould formation.

The leaves are planted and moistened well before being packed into the large pot, packing the small pots so the tops are flush with the top of the large pot, the large pot is then placed into a basin of warm water until the beach sand is wet. From then on I see that the sand in the large pot is always quite moist, (always by setting large pot in a basin of water when needed). The soil in the small pots is always moist but not wet.

I am a sincere believer in sterile soil and clean pots.

I use a soft soil, (one that will not pack) and peat mixture with some of the

beach sand for drainage. The soil is made sterile by steaming for 30 minutes and then screened.

I feel a leaf should be given a chance to live by being placed in a clean pot, and we never know what trouble can be stored in a used pot, so if I am re-using pots, they are well cleaned and placed in a disinfective (a Semesan solution) and if the pots are new, they are soaked in water for two or three days but still go into the Semesan solution.

After I have used all these precautions I am ready to plant my leaves, feeling I have been fair to both the leaf and the party that sold the leaf to me.

I know I have been rewarded as I have realized two and three plantings from each leaf.

One would think after three plantings a leaf would be deteriorated, but not so, the method and conditions must have been about right as when the leaves are discarded they were still a healthy, lovely looking leaf but no more petiole.

I started this method June 1947 and to date I have my first leaf to lose. A fair percentage don't you think?

I also have another fascinating hobby that I feel pays dividends, and that is keeping records of all leaves from their first planting till discarded. Example.

BLUE VELVET — planted Sept. 27 — Soil (on the acid side) and peat mixture — beach sand for drainage. Plantlet appeared in 5 weeks.

BLUE VELVET — replanted Nov. 21 — Soil (sweet) and peat mixture and beach sand for drainage, but using Rootone on the petiole for root stimulance, plantlet appeared in 4 weeks and 4 days, beating its own record by 3 days.

I have found since using the later, its the better of the two.

At the present I have about 125 plantlets which would take a lot of time and care, but as the plantlet leaves the propagating pot, it goes onto a tray on which I have placed charcoal and again the beach sand, keeping the beach sand real moist but not too wet until spring when I will repot into 3 inch pots.

AFRICAN VIOLET SEED

Mixed seed from crosses of many varieties. Packages of approximately 800 seeds, \$1.00. Special crosses ready in October.

FRIENDLY GARDENS

New Bedford, Penna.

MY FAVORITE DOZEN

Esther E. Schadewald

If I were asked to show twelve different varieties of African Violets, I would take into consideration the following:

1. The appeal to the beginner by showing easy to recognize, named varieties.
2. Use of husky, mature plants.
3. Wide color range and abundance of bloom.
4. Unusual containers which would make the violets outstanding in competition with other house plants on display.

I would choose Amethyst, Mentor Boy, Blue Eyes, Red Ionantha, Blue Boy, du Pont Lavender Pink, du Pont Blue, Bi Color, Blushing Maiden, White Lady, Blue Girl, and Orchid Lady.

There are many other varieties for the experienced collector to choose such as the Doubles, Curly Special, Orchid Flute, Pink Girl, Gorgeous, and Trilby, but I think I would choose those which were easiest to obtain by the novice. This idea would probably bring many new members to the African Violet Society. Larger membership would mean more shows in local communities.

I would show the long wiry stemmed varieties, such as Amethyst and Mentor boy, because a single plant of either of these varieties would be of sufficient color and stamina to grace any window sill. The plum shaded hue of Mentor Boy reflects handsomely in the sunlight.

I would add Blue Eyes as my offering of the nearest coloring to baby blue.

By contrast, I would include the maroon blooms of Red Ionantha.

Blue Boy must never be omitted. It can be depended upon in advance of any show for its profusion of blooms. It appeals to beginners because it is comparatively easy to propagate.

Anyone who has the du Pont varieties will admire the heavy beefsteak appearance of their foliage. While they are not profuse bloomers, their blooms are certainly worth waiting for. Their flowers are huge and rich in coloring.

A good Bi Color would be my challenge for shading. Plum colored tips on the two upper petals are a beautiful contrast to the pale orchid coloring of the rest of the bloom.

The delicate pink tint of the white blooms of Blushing Maiden (formerly called Blushing Lady) and the snowy white flowers of White Lady are a delight to any visitor.

Blue Girl foliage is of great interest because of the deeply scalloped leaf with the white spot at its base. Its blooms are a handsome, intense blue.

Finally, I would add a pet of mine, an Orchid Lady, because it is a profuse bloomer of the truest orchid shade. In winter time, it will bloom equally well in a northern, southern, eastern, or western exposure - it makes no difference - and can be depended upon to adorn the window sill of any room in my home.



du Pont Lavender Pink

Photo by Ross Hann

For containers, I would use Pennsylvania Dutch pottery; maybe a large pitcher, decorated tobacco jar, or even a plant jardiniere if it was unusual in coloring or shape. A large fish bowl may be used for young flowering violet plants if other small indoor garden plants and mosses are added to complete the picture.

I hope, in the near future, that many of us may be able to enter our violet plants in nearby flower shows. I know I will do my best to encourage the hobby of collecting African Violets among my friends and acquaintances in our community.



Photo by Ross Hahn

Amethyst

MY FAVORITE DOZEN

Gladys Canner

For me, the du Pont Lavender Pink has always been a bit shy on blooms, but it is one of my favorites. Just one bloom stalk with its large orchid-pink blossoms is something to remember.

Ruffles, I like for its beautiful ruffled (like the name implies) dark foliage which is so dark that under a certain light it seems almost black.

There is something about Bi-color that reminds me of old hand-painted china and I like the heavy lush foliage too.

Neptune, I include in this list for its dark glossy foliage, reddish underneath and the lovely lavender purple blooms which seem to lay all over the plant.

Now, I feel that Mentor Boy is one of my best all around good plants. The dark green leaves have such a healthy look and there is always an abundance of the large deep purple blossoms. Perhaps, tho' in this paragraph - I shall not make a preference between Mentor Boy and Blue Boy, which we are all so very familiar with. The latter, being such a prolific bloomer, makes Blue Boy an ideal favorite, a real stand by with many and a very difficult one to beat!

For a bright spot in your window try putting Red Head along side of Pink Beauty. They just seem to do something for each other. (My Pink Beauty is a deep pink, almost red in the center. Some I have seen have been a very pale pink - but of course, light, soil and fertilizer may cause the difference in color). Red Head I liked the minute I saw it. Would like to find a plant that would keep its rich wine-red shade as this violet first has, when its petals unfurl.

Perhaps this sounds unbelievable, but about two and a half years ago, I had a plant of Ionantha, long stemmed variety, that had ninety-six blossoms on it at one time. I have witnesses to prove it. A friend who has grown Saintpaulias for years said she had never seen such a gorgeous plant. Let me stress the point that it was a single crown plant, too; needless to say it is one of my favorites with its constant bloom.

Blue Treasure is very aptly named. The many bright almost indigo blossoms on a stalk against the red stemmed, red veined foliage is truly a treasure.

My Pink Girl is a picture with her pretty scalloped leaves and lovely large pink blooms. I have had it about ten months and it has never been without a flowering stalk.

Orchid Lady is a good shade of orchid and makes a lovely contrast for the very dark shiny green leaves.

The sturdy medium green foliage of Blue Eyes with its soft clear blue flowers makes a beautiful plant and it is a vigorous grower.

And now in concluding my dozen, there are so many other varieties that I would like to sneak in, but now I can make but one more selection, and I feel that it would be incomplete without the mentioning of White Lady. And tho' I have recorded it at last, I do consider it as a 'must' in any collection, either large or small.

In closing may I wish other violet fans as much enjoyment from their Saintpaulias as I am receiving from mine.

Feasterville, Penna.
May 15, 1948

HELLO EVERYBODY:

Allow me please, this time, to present my letter in sort of a news report fashion. Are all of you ready? Well then, let's enjoy together the first poem dedicated to our Homing Pigeons, contributed by no other than the well-known Jean Crowe of Rossville, Ga., (Unit 11).

The mailman whistled at the gate
I hurried out just couldn't wait,
To see what he had brought around
A Homing Pigeon there I found . . .

Across nine states had winged its way
To visit me 'till the third day,
I read the letters o'er and o'er
Then sent it off from my front door.

To carry on to all the rest -
My greetings and all I thought best,
Of Violet news; that I could share
With other members here and there:
These Pigeons tie in friendships band
People scattered throughout the land,
The members are not set apart
By age, since all are young in heart.
Country or city bred does not matter
Since both are always full of chatter,
Smart looks makes no difference there
We are not judged by what we wear!

Money does not count at all;
The cost of postage is quite small,
And plants, no need to buy each one -
To trade varieties . . . is fun.
You buy one, I'll buy another,
In this way we help each other,
Uniting North, South, West and East,
The "Pigeon" is a "Dove of Peace".

And in conjunction with this same friendly spirit, I am delighted to relate a good scout deed recently performed by Miss Mary Hogeland: Feasterville, Penna. (Unit 15). Her stock of African Violets had multiplied until her window space seemed almost at a premium. But the problem was easily solved, when Miss Hogeland graciously donated twenty-four violets of the common varieties to a neighboring "Home for the Aged". This month, she expects to remember another institution and let more of her posies be a carrier of good Cheer.

Hear Ye! I have a very important announcement to make. Blue Chard and Waterlily (syn. "Starlight") are not yet available or released to the public. Please be patient.

In looking thru my scrap book, I notice that Mrs. Pansy Barnes: Shenandoah, Iowa



(a commercial and conscientious packer) suggests that "a solution of 2 teaspoons of powdered Alum to 1 gallon of rainwater given occasionally will intensify the color of leaves and flowers".

Emily Hodan: Cleveland Heights, Ohio (Unit 6) writes that her group favors the use of liquid fertilizers with Hyponex, and Vitamin B1 leading.

Rosa Peters of Grand Rapids, Michigan (Directors Pigeon, #10) praises Glaswick watering and reports that after she had switched all violets in one room to this method, the humidity had raised to 45° and 50°, amply repaying for her work. Glaswick material may be purchased at the Atlas Asbestos Co.: North Wales, Penna. By the way, Mr. Baxter's Pink Girl and Gorgeous have been given patent numbers 769, and 770 respectively. I would like to request that our public do not infringe, but rather guard the rights of the five patented Saintpaulias. The other three are namely: White Lady, Pink Beauty and Blue Girl.

Now in conclusion, I wish to thank my friends for their contributing material, and I invite each Pigeonite to mail me YOUR interesting data. Anxiously awaiting, and . . .

Sincerely yours,
Elsie Croasdale Freed
(Conductress)

COLLECTING CURSE OR BLESSING?

By Regina and Warren Gottshall

Almost everyone is happy and content with an African Violet, or African Violets; THEN - they discover that in addition to the "blue" one there is also a "white" and a "pink". Perhaps the local florist happens to be lucky enough to get a supply of whites or pinks or, miraculously, both. Again they are happy with these additions until they pass a window and see a "blue" that is not like the one they have, or a "pink" that is more "red". They knock on the door and are invited in; simply because African Violet owners are generally friendly folks. The real trouble or "ailment" starts when they discover that the "different blue" is Neptune and are initiated into the fact that African Violets - curious enough - like other plants - have individual names.

In spite of the fact that in ignorance there is bliss, we cannot for long remain in ignorance because the African Violet Boom, in some circles, is considered even bigger than the Gold Rush or the Florida Real Estate one. The "grapevine" goes into operation with a vengeance and we plague everyone we know until we learn that our blue, and pink, and white are Blue Boy, Pink Beauty and White Lady. During this seige we near whisperings of Blue Bird, Red Head, Kurries, and Orchid Beauty and we write countless letters trying to add these few to our window sills; little knowing that the "collecting" bug has bit us. Finally, via the grapevine, we are asked "Do you have Frieda, or know where it can be had?" We ruin a typewriter two pens and several dollars worth of stationery finding Frieda - because no one else seems to have it. This is the final blow.

After the house is overcrowded with plants, purchased mostly as wee things we discover that Twilight, at our place, happens to be ridiculously similar to Blue Bird; that Pansy Purple Supreme is exactly like a plant we had purchased the year before and merely named Supreme. Our disgust is paramount until we hear of another, this time, exotic name and we are off again - knowing full well that we will probably turn out to be the same as, or very near to, one of the hundred or more plants we now have. Or the final blow may come when we hear a rumor to the effect that Neptune is probably Viking and Viking is probably Neptune. Then where are you?

The fault lies not with the violet; any and all of them are beautiful or have some redeeming feature, but, unfortunately, we

cannot be content with them merely as African Violets. The collecting mania has got hold of us and we are out after NAMES. You gather together fifty names, we gather fifty-five and are disappointed, when we get around to realizing it, because the fifty-five names boil down to twenty-five varieties. The over zealous collector, hybridizer, or grower is at fault supplying the demands of other foolish collectors, hybridizers, or growers. All the names do not originate from chicanery - some must be attributed to ignorance and then, of course, there are the honest differences in leaf or flower that marks a distinct new variety. But chicanery has added its burden. There have been a few names created for pure "sales appeal". Strange as it may seem, it is not the commercial grower who is the real sinner in this case; rather the unscrupulous or careless amateur. The dealer may pass on as a new variety one that has merely been renamed by the amateur, or so very like an already accepted variety that it is not worth giving a separate name. Stock of these are purchased in all good faith and, because of the demand for new names, sold off as young plants before the grower has a chance to develop a mature plant of their own. Ignorance has, however, taken the highest toll.

All African Violet varieties do not grow exactly alike under different conditions - exposures, watering habits, soil mixtures, fertilizers, any of these may make a difference, even the plant's own variable nature. The collector secures a Blue Bird that is not exactly like the Blue Bird already in their possession and sooner or later, of only for means of personal identification, another "handle" is attached to the "different" plant. But collectors have a keener eye for names than they have for varieties and soon the grapevine goes into operation and a new variety HAS been created.

Not every African Violet plant should have a name, few of them deserve one, but this does not detract from the plant itself; which can be just as beautiful being a "violet" or unnamed plant or seedling. The recent rise in popularity has created in one half of the amateurs the desire to be another Baron von Saint Paul; but, as few of us can go off "globe-trotting" we become hybridizers - either to create a "true" red, or find the "mistake" of the "impossible" yellow, or simply to create and be able to name a variety. And well they should. Hybridization should be encouraged but the careless naming of anything ever so slightly different should be discouraged. Don't trust your own judg-

COLLECTING - CURSE OR BLESSING?

ment no matter how different your origination but get the opinion of others. The Society has a committee for the purpose of classifying varieties and would probably be willing to lend a hand in judging whether your find is worthy of a name as being a distinct variety. Neither the committee nor the Society can prohibit your naming anything you choose, so let your conscience and honesty be your just guide.

African Violets themselves have been a blessing in countless instances. Let not our quest for NAMES be the curse that will cause universal discontent with these plants and ultimately push them out of our living-room windows until they become the most "forgotten" genus of the century. This can happen and will happen unless a curb is completely and honestly placed upon the creation of new names. This does not mean that development of new varieties will be stalemated. It means rather that the advancement of African Violets in popularity will be steady and sure. The rose has grown in appeal through the centuries because of control and constraint as have all other plant families. So, too, will the African Violet if we do not smother it under a mountain of conflicting "Names" and "collecting" manias.

TO VIOLET FANS

BLUE GIRL loved a SAILOR BOY,
Which made this MAIDEN BLUSH;
She said he could COMMAND-ER,
But BLUE BOY said: "oh, Slush!"

"I'd rather marry FRIEDA,
With radiant RED HEAD:
Her lovely RED BI-COLOR
Will knock BLUE BOBBY dead."

Then MYRTLE preened her RUFFLES,
Which made her BLUE EYES gleam;
And said: "I love a PURPLE PRINCE,
I think he is SUPREME."

The ADMIRAL then told MRS. BOLES,
To him always be true;
She said: "if I would promise that,
"Twould make poor DUPONT BLUE."

So, AZURE SKIES announce the Spring,
The RED BIRD sings his roundelay;
And MARY WAC and NEPTUNE SPOON,
The BLUEBELLES ring the wedding day.

C. E. Stiner.

"SAINTPAULIA"

Saintpaulia is my botanic name,
I would love to grow for you —
But as I'm terribly tempermental,
I'd better tell you — what to do.

Occasionally spray my foliage,
Tepid water, thanks, will suit,
And I like soil soft and crumbly
But never soggy at my root!

I need lots of light, a little sun,
East window suits me better,
I'm very dainty — want my picture
For a Homing Pigeon letter?

Please don't overcrowd me, but . . .
Don't lose me in too big a pot,
Treat me with some common sense
Then for you, I'll bloom a lot.

When you crave another posie —
Just take pebbles, water and glass
Cut a leaf, then stick it in —
Rooting isn't any task.

In a few weeks up will start
A precious Saintpaulia baby,
Handle me with care and then reuse
And you'll get a dozen . . . maybe.

African Violet is my nick name
But to violets, I'm not related,
And a hundred or more varieties
Makes Life for Holly complicated.

Now, if you'll treat me as advised,
I'll bring you many happy hours,
For to you I will gladly give
My best Saintpaulia flowers.

Ella Nipper.

GROWING AIDS FOR AFRICAN VIOLET FANS

Terra-Lite brand Vermiculite	
4 quart bag	50¢
½ bushel bag	95¢
Hyponex (concentrated plant food)	
1 oz. box	\$.10
3 oz. box25
7 oz. box50
1 lb. box	\$1.00

New Book for African Violet Growers
"THE AFRICAN VIOLET"
by Helen Van Pelt Wilson
\$2.50
(all prices postpaid)
H. G. Hastings Co.
P. O. Box 4088
Atlanta 2, Georgia

SOIL STERILIZATION OF SMALL LOTS OF SOIL

In a technical sense soil sterilization refers to the destruction of all forms of life in a given lot of soil. Such complete sterilization is not only unnecessary in most cases but often has an unfavorable effect on plant growth. Normal growth of many plants is dependent not only on the presence of essential elements but on certain beneficial microorganisms. If soil is completely sterilized these beneficial fungi and bacteria are killed and thus normal plant growth may not result. Therefore partial sterilization of the soil by killing the harmful organisms without destroying those that are beneficial is more desirable. The two practical methods of partial or complete soil sterilization consist of the use of heat or chemicals. Heat is applied either directly as dry heat, as hot water or as steam.

Small amounts of soil may be treated in an oven. Partial sterilization, sufficient to destroy most harmful soil organisms, will be obtained by maintaining a temperature, at the center, of 130°F. for twenty minutes. Almost complete sterilization will be obtained at a temperature of 160°F. for thirty minutes. This form of heat, as well as other forms will alter the texture of the soil and in some cases will cause the soil to be unfit for planting until it has been allowed to stand for several days. One way in which soil texture is altered is in its air-holding capacity. Since plant roots obtain air from the soil this change can readily affect plant growth. Therefore it is best not to over-treat soil that is going to be used for valuable plant material.

If soil has been overheated to the extent that its texture is seriously altered it can be returned to near proper condition by frequent light wetting and aeration. In order to further restore heat-treated soil to a proper condition, a small amount of soil from a disease-free area such as a woods may be mixed with it in order to build up beneficial organisms.

Direct heating of soil by burning wood on the planting site is still used and is a further usage of dry heat.

Sterilization of soil by steam is commonly used in greenhouses. Usually sufficient steam is applied to keep the soil temperature at approximately 180°F. or more for an hour. In the home a pressure cooker could be used for the same purpose. Steam has more drastic effects on soil texture than does dry heat and certain types of soil may be so compacted as to require

several days of frequent aeration. Steam usually results in almost complete sterilization and thus destroys the beneficial organisms which often are very important to plant growth.

Chemical sterilization of soil is becoming increasingly popular. It has the advantages of usually destroying harmful fungi without affecting soil texture. A material that is widely used for treatment of greenhouse and nursery soils is chloropicrin or tear gas. When used properly this material kills fungi, nematodes, bacteria and weed seeds. Although too expensive for most crops many nursery men use it mainly as a means of weed control. Small lots of soil may be treated with chloropicrin by using an air-tight container and applying a small amount of the fumigant with each six inch layer of soil as it is added. Approximately two teaspoonfuls of chloropicrin are needed to treat one cubic foot of soil. The average weight of moderately moist, slightly packed, soil is about 100 pounds per cubic foot. After the fumigant is applied, the soil surface should be watered and the container kept closed for three days. During this time the soil temperature should be maintained above 60°F. Best control of weed seeds is obtained above 80°F.

Formaldehyde (formalin) may also be used as a soil fumigant. It controls most disease-producing fungi and bacteria but in the usual strength used is not very effective against nematodes. It is used as a solution of one part in 50 parts of water by applying directly to the soil at the rate of 1 gallon per square yard for treatment of infected planting areas. Formaldehyde may also be used to treat potting soil by using a solution of one part of commercial formalin with 5 or 6 parts of water and mixing 2½ tablespoonsful with one bushel of soil. Keep the soil covered for about 24 hours and then allow to aerate for 24 hours before using.

Other chemicals which are used as soil fumigants are ethylene dibromide, methylbromide, dichloropropene mixtures (DD), Lawn-a-gen, Dowfume, Soilfume, Bromofume and carbon bisulfide. Uramon (urea) and cyanamide (calcium cyanamide), when properly used will effectively control certain nematodes, fungi and weed seeds.

By W. F. Jeffers
Plant Pathology Division
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

DIRECT SUNLIGHT ON AFRICAN VIOLETS

Harriet F. Lawton

Much has been said about avoiding direct sun on African Violets, especially when shining through windows with the plants too close to the glass. It burns the leaves; the moisture is drawn from the leaf and the leaves turn black and die. This is true particularly during the summer months when the sun is high and at its hottest. In Massachusetts it might be safe to put the plants in the direct sunlight from the end of October until the middle or end of April. But, from late April until late October at least, watch out! During these months the plants should be shielded in some way from the direct heat.

Others must be situated as I am, so that the sunny windows are the only available ones for plant culture. It is true that African Violets do not need direct sun to bloom, but they do need light and plenty of it. The greater the light intensity, (not necessarily sunlight) the greater the bloom. So, if one has only a sunny window in which to grow violets, they need not give up for the thing is quite possible with the proper shielding from that intense sunlight. If lace curtains are at the window, fine. They let in light but break the direct sun. If not, another way is quite possible and has worked out in my case very well.

A curtain is made of clear plastic and this material can be purchased at the yard goods counter of a department store. This comes a yard wide and sells for about \$.49 or \$.59 per yard. This curtain can be made to snap into place in a jiffy and kept there until the sun is by when it can be removed. Make this as follows: Stitch on the machine with a long stitch. 1/4 inch hem on either edge of curtain for strength. 1 inch hem top and bottom. A piece of 1/2 inch tape with elastic inserted in the middle, (for elasticity and a snug fit) and loops at either end of tape. These should be a bit longer than the width of the curtain. Make two of these, one to be run through the top hem and one through the bottom. The curtain can then snap into place as a small nail or brad is driven into the outside of the window frame to correspond with the four loops, one at each corner of curtain.

These curtains have many uses. Ours are on a small sun porch with windows on the East and South.

1. As a shield against cold: As a protection on cold nights between plants and windows. These have been used in conjunction with corrugated cardboard for extra insulation at plant level with outside temperature as low as 15° below zero. The temperature on the porch averages from 55° to 60° just inside the curtains. Curtains are removed during the day time in

winter if warm outside or after sun has warmed up the glass sufficiently. On a severely cold day the curtains may be left up. The plants still get sufficient light through them.

2. As protection against intense sun:

From late April, (earlier if necessary) until late October. Remove when sun no longer rests on plants.

3. Insulator against heat: They have been used as a convenience to keep out reflected heat from a trap rock driveway next to porch, making the porch a more comfortable place to sit, in extremely hot weather. Upon return from vacation I discovered my family found it a great relief in extremely hot weather as well as the plants!

4. As a shield when spraying: When spraying plants in window boxes just off porch, these were set up as a shield. The spray gun could be aimed towards the porch without danger to violets.

5. High wind or rain: In case of either, two extra tapes are used, (made in the same way) and are run diagonally from corner to corner and crossing in the middle. This keeps the curtain from billowing in, sail like, and injuring the plants.

This plastic is very durable and while it may become stiff with use, with exposure to sun and with contact with water and sprays, it is still usable over a long period of time. It has solved many difficulties for me and I believe others will find it useful too. It is well in making these curtains, to have them come just below the tops of pots in order to leave a little circulation of air.

AFRICAN VIOLET FEVER

A bug bit the lady and
The lady caught the fever,
Saint Paulia collecting,
The ailment would'n't leave 'er.
More plants, more kinds and colors
Was the lady's endeavor.
The hobby grew in leaps and bounds,
She was very clever
At finding new ones, and her zeal
Brought leaves from far and near.
The shelves were full, the tables too
Scarcely a chair was clear,
'Til the plants got the upper hand.
And now we greatly fear,
That the Hobby rides the lady,
For her family shed a tear.

Jean Crowe.

CLUB SUGGESTIONS

From a Handbook for African Violet
Growers by Mary Margaret Odom

With many African Violet Clubs being formed throughout the United States the following suggestions are given to aid in both organizing your club and planning your programs.

The following Constitution and By-Laws may with minor changes be adapted for most Clubs:

Article I Name -- The name of this organization shall be the _____ African Violet Club.

Article II Purpose -- The purpose of this organization shall be both social and educational.

Article III Membership -- Application for membership in the society shall be by written application, and approved by majority of active members.

Article IV Dues -- The annual dues for the individual members shall be _____, payable on or before _____.

Article V Officers & Elections - The officers of this Club shall be a President; one or more Vice-Presidents; a Recording Secretary; a Corresponding Secretary; a Treasurer; and a Reporter.

These officers shall be elected at the first meeting of each year.

1. President shall preside at all meetings. She shall appoint all committees, and to perform all duties pertaining to such office, and ex-officio of all committees.

2. The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President; and shall at all times assist the President in such work of the Club as may be assigned to her.

3. Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate account of all meetings of the Club. These minutes shall be read and approved at the regular meetings of the Club.

4. The Corresponding Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the club.

5. The Treasurer shall collect all dues and give receipts for same; Keep accurate account of same; pay all bills approved by the club. A report may be given the club each meeting.

6. These officers shall be elected by the club once a year for a period of one year.

Article VI Meetings -- The Society shall hold one or more meetings during a month for the transaction of its business and for the study of the work.

Article VII Amendments -- Proposed amendments to the constitution shall be sent to the Recording Secretary at least 30 days before the annual meeting.

Planning The Club Program

Most groups find that planning the program a year in advance is an advantage both to the club and to the members. Those in charge of the program have plenty of time to plan and prepare it. The overall results are that the meetings are more organized and inclusive.

Here are some general tips which may be adapted for most groups:

1. Make a list of topics or suggestions that members and program committee would like to cover during the year's work. (Learning wishes of individual members will make the committee's job easier and will satisfy more people as well.)

2. Decide what topics to use, and choose a subject and related roll call for every meeting. Make the program simple enough that it can be handled easily in the time allotted.

3. Plan special programs for holidays and special meetings (such as an exchange of leaves or plants, a choice plant for oldest and youngest mother on Mother's Day; or drawing of names at the beginning of the year for Sunshine Pals, to whom is given at various occasions, like birthdays and holidays, such gifts as African Violet plants, leaves, containers, plant food, etc. Of course the identity of the Sunshine Pal is not disclosed until the end of the year.)

4. Do not put many speakers on one program. If papers are to be read, set time limits of 5 to 10 minutes.

5. Try to match topics with individuals. People talk best about things in which they are most interested.

6. Include in the program hour, when possible, something relaxing or entertaining.

7. Plan to vary the programs by different means of presenting them. For example, debates, round-table discussions, outside speakers, exhibits, demonstrations, plays or field trips to greenhouses or homes.

8. Keep a list of material or sources from which ideas for subjects might have been obtained so persons in charge of programs can find additional material.

9. Have a booklet or some way of listing programs so a copy can be given to members. Yearbooks, typewritten or printed, add much to the program interest.

10. Publicize your program thru the local or county newspaper. Let other people know what your group is doing and accomplishing.

HOW I BECAME INTERESTED IN AFRICAN VIOLETS

By Lois F. Williamson

The above title was given me to write about; but I should prefer calling it "Fun With Leaves", for that is what I am having. It all began more than eleven years ago when my sister-in-law brought me a small plant from Tennessee; I know now that it was a Blue Boy. It was love at first sight. Not having even heard of the African Violet before, I knew nothing of how it should be cared for; so, in due time it went the way of all that is mortal. A friend in the city where we were living gave me another, and even after carefully following her directions this little plant soon joined her sister in the land where good plants go.

After a while of this trial and error method I reasoned that there must be a right and wrong way, and that some flower lovers somewhere must have the scientific know how. The extension floriculturist, Victor H. Ries, from the University of Ohio, set me on the road to successful culture of the plants, though there was much to learn in the school of practical experience - and I am still enrolled as a pupil. Since that time a number of current magazines have featured excellent articles dispensing on a silver platter the valuable information that I had previously gained the hard way.

Although I had grown African Violets successfully for several years, I did not attempt making any sort of collection until fairly recently. In 1944 both sons were in the service of our country, and my husband, a minister, had suffered a stroke of apoplexy. It seemed that my few little violets on our breakfast-room window shelves gave release from the anxieties and assurance of God's abiding presence, giving comfort, strength and guidance for the daily demands. As time went on my husband's health improved, and we took a country pastorate, giving up the large church in the town. His horticulture interests have been a great contribution to his complete restoration of health.

Being in a rural community I felt that I, too, should have some agricultural project as my church or "talent money" as some call it. Naturally, I turned to the violets, specializing in the varieties that ordinarily cannot be secured from the florists. The word went around by the grape-vine route, and now I cannot begin to supply the demand. The income from the sale of the plants and leaf cuttings I have used as my "for others" project. In looking over my list of benevolences for last year I realize that it has been my privilege to literally go around the world with violets. It is a joy to share them with friends, though I make it a practice of never giving them unless I detect that tantalizing, sincere, drooling gleam in their eyes - a real longing to possess

one, and the assurance that it will be loved and well cared for if they get it. Not often have I misinterpreted that look.

With the help of a printer in our congregation I prepared a little sheet giving the outstanding points in the care of the African Violet in the home. This has proven a real time saver, for I have many requests for the information. My correspondence has given me many lovely friends whom I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting in person, though hope to have that privilege sometime in the future.

To make a collection of all known varieties is not my objective. I have a number of the best basic varieties, and about an equal number of some of the more recently developed ones - about thirty different kinds altogether, covering most of the range of color and leaf design. Some of these I shall perhaps discard later as newer and better ones are forthcoming. Some of my prized plants are the few that are gifts from the ones who have developed the variety. However, my start of a new plant has usually come from the purchase of a single leaf; and, having Scotch blood, when I pay fifty cents for a leaf I get as many rootings as possible. The record so far is five, and the leaf is still green. good for a few more, I think. Of course I am having fun with leaves! To me, the big thrill comes with getting that first bloom of a plant started from a leaf of your own planting; but most people want the plant - and it full of blooms also. The lack of time and space limits the number of plants I am able to grow; but, so far, have been able to supply the requested leaf cuttings.

All stories must have a climax, and this one is no exception. It's proof positive that dreams do come true - that is, if you dream and work long enough, and have good kind friends. Provision is made in most of minister's homes for the pastor's study, but I've never yet known one that had a retreat for his wife. But this manse has. "Fair Haven". The finishing touches are now being put on, and we can hardly wait to move in. It is a 12 by 16 ft. sun room adjacent to the garage. There is space nearest the garage for the tea cart, sewing machine and day-bed, and around the east and south sides, under the windows, is a three foot table for flowers, with storage shelves underneath for canned fruit and other things. It is really the overflow room. My family and friends have accused me of growing African Violets so that people would visit me. This is a delightful by-product, and I admit my guilt. Therefore, I invite my friends to have a cup of tea, or coffee if you prefer, with us in "Fair Haven": But -- do tele-

HOW I BECAME INTERESTED IN AFRICAN VIOLETS.

phone first, for I might be out with my husband pastoral calling, and I should hate to miss you. Do not give up if you repeatedly get the busy signal, for our telephone is on a party line.

So, growing African Violets is definitely a spiritual exercise for me, not only as my "for others" project, but also in my own development. I remarked one day that the plants taught me many things, and when asked what particular virtue I most developed I promptly replied "patience". They are so slow growing, and refuse to be hurried. Typical little Southerners, these African Violets!

It seems to me that somewhere I read that if older people want to retain their zest for living they must either be regularly engaged in useful work suited to their capacity of strength and training, or devote themselves to an absorbing hobby. As I have both, it must be that I am trying to keep young in mind and heart until Gabriel calls.

TINARI EXHIBIT AT FLOWER SHOW

Received Award of Merit;
Many Varieties

Visitors at the Philadelphia Flower Show once again were thrilled with the African Violet Exhibit which won an award of merit in the special class, displayed by the Tinari Floral Gardens of Bethayres, who are specializing in this popular house plant.

More than 40 distinct varieties were on display throughout the week, very popular was "Blue Eyes" Tinari's own introduction, a soft baby blue, the Double Russian, a real double flowering variety displayed in full bloom, the ever popular Red Head, Trilby, Red Bi-color, Crinkles, the large flowering duPont and new Pink Beauty Supreme (Amazon). Attention too was given to the curious Albinos and variegated leaf sports in bloom.

Violet collectors from
Delaware Maryland,
Washington, D. C., Vir-
ginia, North Carolina.
and Maine were most
enthusiastic over Mr.
Tinari's newest intro-

duction "The Orchid Flute" a beautiful deep colored orchid that opens when full mature to a very soft solid true delicate orchid some 2 to 2½" in diameter, with a sturdy large leaf, most outstanding.

Many visitors and guests later visited the gardens to see hundreds of the most colorful varieties in full bloom.

MY WIFE'S AFRICAN VIOLETS

Saintpaulias - - - hobby of my wife
Have now become part of my life;
And since they are so very fine
She calls them hers, I call them mine.

Other house plants, we have few - - -
Here and there, maybe one or two,
But violets we have by the score
Pink, blue, red and many more.

They're most beautiful to behold - - -
And more satisfying than gold,
They help to decorate our place
By filling every little space.

It's such a joy to see them grow
Big and little, row on row,
Cloudy days have no more gloom
When one has violets full of bloom.

The foliage and the flowers sweet
Help to make life more complete
And though at times they seem like many
Who would want to live without any?

Only God could make this flower
To comfort men in every hour,
To Him be praise forevermore
For the violets we adore.

By Rev. Mr. Morgan Andreas
Adamstown, Md.



PHOTO BY ROSS HARR

Pink Supreme (Amazon)

HAVE YOU MET MRS. BOLES?



If you have never met Mrs. Boles she is best described as a large and very handsome Saintpaulia. Some similarity is found to exist between this lady, and Mrs. W. K. du Pont, and the lovely Marine. Their foliage is somewhat alike and their blossoms though quite different in shape and texture are a rather similar shade of medium blue.

Mature leaves of Mrs. Boles measure from 3-1/4 inches by over 3-1/2 inches with pale green petioles averaging about 4 inches in length. Petioles of young leaves often have a touch of purple on them. A slight amount of purple is also found beneath the hairy mature medium green leaves which are most heavily quilted, very deeply fluted, and tend to cup upward slightly

at the leaf axil. Young plants are a light to medium green which deepens as the plant ages. The foliage most nearly resembles the duPont varieties, but it is much heavier and the leaf is more pointed.

Mrs. Boles blooms at an average rate with large flowers of heavy substance from 1-3/4 inches to 2-1/4 inches across. The depth of color is often determined by the exposure the plant is grown in, the method of fertilization followed, and the type of soil used. The flowers have an attractive ruffled edge and are produced in clusters of 4 to 8 on sturdy stems usually well above the foliage. Blue Violet number 4 according to the Fischer Color Chart best describes Mrs. Boles flowers.

AFRICAN VIOLETS: and other choice houseplants. Send stamp for our spring list.

YOARS HOUSEPLANT NURSERY
Bunker Hill, Indiana

● ● AFRICAN VIOLETS ● ●

Plants in bloom, packaged to arrive in fine condition.

Would you like my free catalog?

MRS. JENNIE SPOUTZ

16825 Collingham

Detroit 5, Mich.

JUST IN BRIEF

By Inquisitive

SHAKESPEARE SAYS. "At Christmas I no more desire a rose than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth; but like of each thing that in season grows." These lines by the immortal Bard are apt regarding the flowering seasons out in the open, and most of us do agree with him. Each flower has its blooming season out in the open, influenced very largely, of course, by the seasons.

But our favorite, the African Violet, is a sheltered plant and is not appreciably influenced in its blooming by the seasons. I well recall a dark and gloomy day I spent at work in our greenhouse last February. The wind was blowing a gale outside, but many sections of the greenhouse benches were fairly alive with lovely and colorful bloom and contrasting foliage colors. It was not difficult at all to do a bit of dirty work that day. In fact, as I now recall it, I believe that I whistled and hummed lively tunes all day long in that pleasing atmosphere. Who wouldn't?

BUT ITS SPRING NOW, and the African Violet plants in our kitchen windows, as I write this, are really doing their stuff. Its warm, balmy and sunny outside. Fifteen different varieties in three inch pots are on the ledges of the three windows. These fifteen varieties are my favorites today. But I'm fickle and if tomorrow I think I like some other varieties in our collection better, they will become my favorites. But these particular fifteen varieties on the window ledges are in full bloom and are really a sight to behold. By name they are: Purple Beauty, duPont Lavender Pink, White Lady, Commander, Blue Velvet, Fushia, Norseman, Blushing Maiden, Mentor Boy, Amazon Pink, Redland, duPont Blue, Dainty Maid, Blue No. 32, Amazon Blue. So our favorite indoor plant, the African Violet, is no special respecter of seasons, and may bloom profusely anytime.

YOUNG PLANTS DESIRABLE. I well recall the day last year when I selected and planted the leaf cuttings from which these fifteen plants of today's favorites came. My records indicate it was May 7, 1947, and now at the end of a little less than eleven months, comes the real pay-off. I like young plants best, the year-olders. The first full round of blooms on practically all varieties of well-grown plants of this age are exquisite. The color of the first blooms seem to me to be richer in tone and of better size.

COLOR TONES. An old friend, who is not an African Violet fancier, was in to see us a short time back. She pointed out the difference in color tones of three varieties of African Violets that we had not previously noted. She compared three of the purple or violet shades by placing a fresh bloom from each of them on white blotting paper. The bloom from the variety Neptune had almost a pure, clear purple-violet shade; the bloom from Supreme is the same shape as the Neptune bloom, but has a bit of red in the purple which gives it a slight purple-red tone. Commander's bloom, also similar in shape to Neptune's bloom, also quite a bit of red in it which gives it a red-purple tone. This type of close comparison helps greatly in discerning true color tones. Try it sometime.

TWO LOVELIES. I tried to pass them hurriedly in the greenhouse because I had a caller. But both were in bloom and were such neat and unusual types of African Violets as to color of foliage and form of growth, that I was compelled to go back later and again look them over at close range. The Lady-of-Our-House calls these two "Her Lovelies" and by name they are Blue Eyes and Dainty Maid. Blue Eyes has light olive green, short stemmed leaves that are slightly pointed and ovate in general shape. It has a tufted form of growth that is dainty and appealing, and blooms attractively low above its foliage. Color of its medium size blooms is what I call old fashion "baby blue", which is light blue of course.

Dainty Maid has light green leaves that are somewhat round in shape and are slightly hairy. It, too, has a tufted form of growth almost identical with Blue Eyes. Its cameo pink blooms are considerably larger than the blooms of Blue Eyes, but they, too, bloom attractively low over the foliage. While I am not yet sure, my guess is that both Blue Eyes and Dainty Maid are either sports or seedlings of White Lady. Does anyone of our readers know about this? Tell us if you do.

ITS ALMOST GREY, in "color tone" declared the neighbor from across the road who is an expert on flower arrangement and naturally has a good eye for color in flowers. So I believe we can let it go at that and say that Tinted Lady is the first grey African Violet I've seen. I like it, both for its unusual color tone and its dark green leaves that are very much like the leaves of *Ionantha grandiflora* in color and shape, but happily, the leaf stems of

JUST IN BRIEF

Tinted Lady are considerably shorter than *Ionantha grandiflora*'s. When Tinted Lady gets a wide distribution I predict that a real national liking for it will come about.

FEEDING THE SOIL is so very closely related to feeding plants that all of us should have at least a basic understanding of this relationship. Mr. John L. Cope, of Savannah, Georgia, and one of the best informed men in the South on plant nutrition, said that plant feeding is based upon two important factors. First, it is necessary to feed the soil to make it's physical structure capable of supporting optimum plant growth. Being a champion for inorganic fertilizers - he manufactures them and certainly understands their greatest values - Mr. Cope is also broad-minded enough to realize the necessity of organic materials in the soil along with that of the inorganics. In further stating this, he indicated that we must first incorporate humus - such as manures, good composts, peat moss and the like - into most soils that are apt to be somewhat bare of these elements to make them retentive of moisture and plant foods in solution. Humus is one of the most important soil constituents, for it is valuable not only for its moisture-holding capacity, but is also necessary to support bacterial life in the soil and to aid in improving the condition of clay and sandy soils.

This incorporation of humus in the soil is termed by Mr. Cope as, "Feeding the Soil". Then, he states, we are ready to feed our plants. This is where the inorganic elements fit into the picture perfectly, for much of the soils in practically every part of the Country are either devoid or partially devoid of both the essential and minor plant foods. These can be supplied mainly through the so-called inorganic fertilizers, or commercial fertilizers as they are popularly known. The forms of humus that we use in soil building cannot be compared in food value to these commercial fertilizers which contain valuable mineral elements. In fact, we African Violet growers cannot get along without either organics or inorganics. They should be used in the soil building programs as companions, not as opponents.

AFRICAN VIOLETS COMMERCIALY

By Ruth Yoars

As retail growers, we are interested in the plants, varieties, care, pests and all other phases of the collections of our patrons, so that their efforts may be suc-

cessful and they will have the enjoyment which they have a right to expect from their African Violets. We learn to love all plants, as we care for them, months before they are ready for our customers. In this article, we wish to bring out a few of the most important factors in producing Saintpaulias for the trade. The grower must satisfactorily work out every angle of his problems and the requirements are numerous. This is done mostly through experience and profiting from mistakes. While the State Universities and even the State Department of Entomology have accomplished considerable, yet there still seems much more to be learned about this temperamental house plant. Therefore the growers will have to continue experimenting for themselves until they find a method that is successful to their own individual need.

One finds that in the course of a few months almost every conceivable question will arise. They include culture, combating diseases, varieties and queries not even concerning African Violets. We take the problems seriously of the questions we are unable to answer and endeavor to experiment attempting to find an explanation. As to the proper soil, because of the various kinds over the country, we suggest that the interested violet fan have their's tested. We use "neutral soil" and advise where this is not available the use of proper food to balance it and to keep the plants in good condition.

Spring or fall are the most desirable times in which to have your soil analyzed. If unprepared to do this yourself, send a sample to your county farm bureau agent or your state agriculture college. I suggest your using a trowel to make 6 or 7 inch hole. Next cut a thin, uniform slice from top to bottom and care should be taken to prevent the soil from becoming contaminated with dust, chemicals or fumes of any kind.

Soil Scale: pH

- 9.5 intensely alkaline
- 9. strongly alkaline
- 8.5 definitely alkaline
- 8. moderately alkaline
- 7.5 slightly alkaline
- 7. NEUTRAL
- pH 6.5 very slightly acid
- 6. slightly acid
- 5.5 moderately acid
- 5. moderately acid
- 4.5 definitely acid
- 4. strongly acid
- 3.5 intensely acid

In regards to insects we have tried many kinds of sprays in an effort to find a satisfactory one and can at last recom-

AFRICAN VIOLETS COMMERCIALLY

mend NNOR Rotenone to the public, as the African Violet and its reaction to many insecticides is entirely different from other plants. "Rotenone can claim the almost unique feature of being deadly to insects but harmless to human beings, pets and plants, in the concentration in which it is generally used as an insect spray".

As to varieties, we frequently have requests for specified kinds before we know they exist - so we can make a note of them and then begin an extensive hunt. Many times it has been proven to be an error in the name, or another synonym. A long, long time is consumed in the propagation and testing of any new violet before it is available to the public on the market. All seedlings should be discarded that prove similar to previously named varieties.

We have been collectors for a number of years and a new strain, or color to us is as "mouth watering a morsel as a juicy bone is to a dog", (pardon my quotation from Miss Fay Wilcox, a very friendly competitor - but I, myself, am at a loss to find a better comparison). As a service to our patrons, we conscientiously try to avoid the listing of two or more similar violets under separate names. Tho' occasionally we are mistaken after we have formed an opinion that there did exist a difference, time has proven some of them to be identical, or nearly so. One illustration of this, is when we bought Western Amethyst from Michigan, Orchid Lady and Rosie from Iowa, and Light Orchid Beauty Lavender Lady from Georgia. When they began blooming we found them to be so nearly identical that it was not advisable to list them separately. We understand that the first name given to this group, was Light Orchid Beauty. We have also had another different experience with the old, original (dark) Orchid Beauty and Mary Wac. We had these and believed them to be sufficiently different to warrant offering them as two varieties, even after others had pronounced them alike. The explanation is quite simple. Plants in this color group fade and when grown in different exposures show entirely different tones of orchid. Finally, we set them in the same light and in just a few days found they were alike in every respect but a minor one - when they are grown in blocks of several hundred, the Orchid Beauty shows a red cast over the blossoms while Mary Wac has a tinge of blue. However, this of no value to the collector as when they are set out as single specimens this difference is so slight that it is not noticeable. I am also of the opinion that

Trilby and Plum can be grouped in this same category as Orchid Beauty and Mary Wac.

We seldom sell plants before they come into bloom, as it is well known that African Violets throw sports or mutations and when sold before they have blossomed, people occasionally feel they have received a mislabeled plant. While these sports, if kept in our possession, prove in some cases to be important to us. Under ordinary circumstances these can in a short period revert back to the original plant, yet a commercial has learned to stabilize these sports in a few generations that will make it remain a different variety.

Another topic that brings many inquiries is the fertilizer subject. We have been most successful in using cow manure water - put out commercially under many different trade names. One that I have in mind is Ligua-Nure and either this or a similar product can be purchased at large seed houses, if it is not available near by. We recommend the use of it, because it is a cool tonic and never burns the most tender roots.

In conclusion I take pleasure in stating that we endeavor to give our customers prompt service and we leave no stones unturned in packing plants in a satisfactory way. But, after the packages leave us, we must entrust them with others who we hope will adhere to our "Perishable" and "Fragile" warnings. Long live the African Violet and may the public have continued success and enjoyment in growing them!

SAINT PAULIAS

"Saint Paulia" they are called
In robes of verdant hue
And wearing on each blossomed head
Bright halos of royal blue.
Small saints in truth they seem;
Sweet harbingers of heaven above
Teaching a creed of brotherhood
Symbolic of the Father's love.
Across this mighty land of ours
In all its far-flung ends
Devotees of Saint Paulias
Once strangers, now are friends.

--By Neva Beers

"CARE AND CULTURE OF AFRICAN VIOLETS"

By Lloyd Putnam Lindsey
Third edition (enlarged). Gives many
secrets of the experts, 50¢
Safety African Violet Waterer 25¢
(No Stamps) African Violets, Box 1666
Asheville, N. C.

MY 1948 PLAN FOR SAINTPAULIAS, PLUS A VACATION AWAY FROM HOME

BY: Helen Pochurek

First, let me tell my sad story, and sad it was, to say the least. I shall profit by the experiences I had in 1947 both good and bad. I had about 75 plants, that I had planned to exhibit at our Garden Club show in September. They were all different varieties and by the middle of August were a mass of bloom. They were a sight to see, as they sat on the glass shelves in the dining room windows.

Without a qualm, we planned a weeks vacation on Lake Huron. We closed the house up after providing for moisture, proper sunlight, and all the necessary things in plant care. Let me emphasize, not knowing what the weather would be, we did not leave a window open.

After a glorious week we came home, to find my beautiful plants were a sorry looking mess. On only one plant was there a blossom left, and that was just a lonely, dejected looking blossom. The leaves hung over the sides of the pots and the plants looked as tho they would never recover. They were not in need of water and I could not imagine what had happened to them.

The next day, still wondering what I had done wrong, I began to freshen up my living room. In moving some large chairs around, I found large patches of mold on the carpeting. Quick as a wink it dawned on me just what had caused my plants to very near go to that special place in heaven that is reserved for African Violets. I realized it was lack of fresh air, with the house closed up the air had become stagnant. Then and there the mystery was explained.

Fresh air was a thing my African Violets, and I had taken for granted until I saw what lack of it would do.

Now for the good experience. The balance of my African Violets enjoyed their vacation outdoors. Early in June, when the temperature was in the 70's and the trees in full bloom and leaf, out went the plants not in bloom, the tiny ones, and the leaves I had in small pots. Even 4 large aquariums full of potted leaves. With my fingers crossed I set all the pots in large flats and set them on the ground - I found a natural made to order place for them. On our hillside, we have a carpet of honeysuckle. Thru the honeysuckle grow huge clumps of wild purple violets. An old apple tree with spreading branches stands about 50 feet from our dining room windows. Its low spreading branches have been an invitation for the honeysuckle to climb on. As a result, nature has made a bower with a dense covering of honeysuckle high up in the branches. There, I set my flats and every few days, I went out to see them.

Every plant seemed to take on new life and seemed to love their new home. One day, disaster struck in the form of a rabbit. I found quite a few leaves chewed off. So up the flats went on cement blocks, about two feet from the ground. Then they really began to go to town. The undersides of the leaves took on such beautiful colors. It was a joy to see them, even the tiniest leaf became a large plant in a very short time.

They received no sun, except a stray ray here and there in late afternoon. Not once did I water them, I left that to Mother Nature. Even in the dry spells, they didn't mind. The dense shade helped to keep them from drying out too much.

They remained outdoors until late in Sept. The weather had been very nice and then, quite without warning, it turned quite cold. Being busy in the house I did not notice it, until in the early evening I went outdoors.

It was decidedly cold when I happened to think of my violets. We checked the temperature and I was horrified to find that it registered 45°. I thought I would find them in a sorry state, but they seemed to be O.K. We moved them into the garage for a few days so as not to subject them directly into a warm house from a chilly outdoors. Left them there for a few days and then gradually moved them into the basement. After they had become acclimated to the house, I started to clean them up. They were dirty and dusty, not very attractive in that condition. Soooo, how to clean them was next. How? (a plug for Proctor and Gamble), I used "Dreft" in one of my laundry tubs with warm water, then warm water in the other tub. I used a soft brush and cleaned each and every leaf, then rinsed them off in the other tub. It took me two days to do them all and a tedious job it was. I was well satisfied, tho as plants had never looked prettier, they were so rosy colored from their outdoor sojourn. I had to use extreme caution, tho as they were so brittle, they broke very easy.

Then, in case any stray creatures had found their way into the pots, they were given a dose of sodium selenate. I didn't lose a plant with all this drastic and unorthodox treatment. The plants that I thought I was going to lose in the house, the ones in my sad story, also became rejuvenated with only a months outdoor sojourn.

What interested me was the fact, that even tho they had been so cold, at a temperature that should have meant their doom, they didn't mind it a bit. I attribute that, to the fact, that they had gradually, from day to day, become accustomed to the

lowered atmosphere and became hardened to it. This summer I am going a bit farther and leave a plant out, just to check it to see how cold it can get before it succumbs.

I am putting all my plants outdoors as soon as it is warm enough, even tho' they are in bloom. I know they will come thru with flying colors, for they are not the sissy's we've always thought them to be. I most heartily recommend a vacation for you and your Saintpaulias.

SAINT PAULIAS CAN BE HARDY

Mrs. William L. Forrest

Going on the assumption that almost all amateur African Violet growers are eager to read of the experience of another amateur, I will try and pass on to you what I have learned about this beautiful flower.

As I wanted to raise many plants from leaf cuttings my husband built a 5-ft. by 5-ft. cold frame, sinking the 2-inch thick wooden sides 2-ft. into the ground and leaving 1-ft. above ground. Instead of making a flat glazed top usually attached to a cold frame, he made glazed sections for roof and ends, and mounted them on the foundation at a pitch of sixty degrees. It is like a miniature greenhouse with a door on the South end just large enough for me to get inside and kneel. Ventilation is at top, and also from the door. We picked a location that gets very early morning sun and then shade until the afternoon. We had no idea what the temperature would rise to inside this frame.

There is no floor; just the garden soil, and into this I forked a thin layer each of rotted manure, coarse leaf mold, peat moss, compost from my compost heap and some vermiculite. The soil here - on Long Island - is very sandy so I did not add sand. This was watered and let stand for a few days.

The first batch of leaves were planted the middle of August, each stem first being dipped in Rootone. The weather was still quite warm so that the temperature inside of the frame rose to 200-degrees and over during the afternoon when the sun rays were directly on the glass, in spite of shading material put on the glass and the door being left open. The soil was kept damp so the humidity was exactly to thier liking - in fact the inside of the frame had the humid smell of a tropical plant greenhouse. In less than two weeks the first batch of leaves had good roots. At inter-

vals of a week or so I started new leaves until the end of September. All formed large roots necessitating the use of three and four inch pots when I potted them up. Incidentally, I had placed a bought Violet in the frame and from it my young plants got the tiny black fly. I used the soil from the frame for potting purposes, and in it I mixed tobacco dust. I haven't seen a black fly since. I also added a little Hyponex to the potting soil. Even in October good heat generated in the frame, which I attribute to the 2-ft. of foundation in the ground and the large area of glass to catch the sun rays.

Within six weeks of the time the first leaves were planted I brought into the house fifty-eight plants - most of them with many new leaves. Since then these plants have been standing on large trays filled with dry sand, over a radiator, in a Southern exposure. Venetian shades keep the strong sun rays off the plants, but they do get a little diffused sunshine. They have had to contend with adverse conditions. When the sun shines on the window its heat, together with the radiator heat, goes up to 100-degrees (a fact my husband had to verify for himself before he would believe it). During the evening and through the night the temperature drops to 50-degrees, yet these plants have continued to grow and are very healthy. They are nearing the blooming age and are showing all the indications that they will bloom.

THEY CALL IT SODIUM SELENATE

By Bonnie Hale

"Our plants are clean, insect-free, treated with sodium selenate" writes one reputable grower of violets. "Plants Bite Back" catches my eye in another advertisement. This must be just what our club needs for the discussion of disease at the next meeting. But suppose Little Kwensis should get sick? I'd better not wait to write a letter, I'll just call long-distance.

"Yes. Solium Selenate?" "Yes, I can wait till you find the formula." "I hesitate to give you the formula" says the voice on the other end of the wire, "It is dangerous, so dangerous that too much will kill your violets, and too little is of no benefit. Understand, it's your own risk."

More determined than ever, I call the seed stores. "You might try the wholesale drug" they say. I try another. "You never heard of it?" Says the voice, "A place in New York has it." "Yes," I reply, "I'm expecting a package."

THEY CALL IT SODIUM SELENATE

Not a cobra or anything dangerous is in the package, which is marked "Caution", "Do Not Drop", "Handle With Care", "Dangerous". I shan't touch the stuff. Seems I have heard one should wear a mask when working with it. If only I had written down every word they said.

Come's New Year's Day, a holiday. After driving three-hundred miles in the tail-end of a hurriean, we arrive at our destination to see right before our eyes hundred of gallons of the lovely blue liquid in the making. Sodium selenate they call it. No mask, no fumes! In three weeks, sixty thousand little African Violets will bite back.

Now my violets, that were trying to develop into a eabbage, have been treated with sodium selenate and not one of them died. I'm afraid I did not make the solution strong enough.

Dr. W. E. Blavreit of Cornell University told a florist's meeting at Cornell that sodium selenate is out of experimental stage. Over eighteen thousand pounds were used in 1946. Following directions carefully, lets keep our African Violets clean and strong with Sodium Selenate.

ANTHRACNOSE IN AFRICAN VIOLETS

By Deane Waskey

Growing African Violets has been my hobby for several years. I had invested \$20.00 this fall for new varieties and was enjoying their beautiful blooms when disaster struck. It is a custom of mine to brush the leaves with a soft brush, and one morning I noticed small pin-point holes in the leaves. Upon examining the underside of the leaves I found round, to irregular sunken spots which were whitish in color; these looked very much like cankers I have found on vegetable leaves such as Cucumber, Melons, Beans, Tomatoes, etc.

These spots eventually turned brown and dropped out leaving a hole in the leaf. The leaf would then turn brown around the edges wilt and die.

I examined the leaves for Mealy Bugs, Cyclamen Mites, and knew it was not Crown Rot. Some of the entire plant leaves were destroyed and died. The disease spread rapidly, so that each plant I owned became infected. No one seemed to know the cause or the control, so I sent a leaf and some of the earth the plants grew in to four plant pathologists of four State Universities and to one greenhouse that grew nothing but African Violets. None of them could analyze nor diagnose the disease. Some felt it was a fungus

disease, while others felt it was a virus disease, but none offered a method of control.

The greenhouse said they had seen several nurseries infested with the trouble and called it NEMATODES, a very contagious disease of the roots. Since I received no definite help from these sources I began to study the cause from a pamphlet called "Diseases and Insects of Vegetables," published by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture. The description and pictures of a plant infected with a disease called ANTHRACNOSE caused by a bacteria seemed to describe my trouble perfectly.

The control they prescribed was spraying with Bordeaux Mixture. I used one teaspoon of a preparation called Fungibordo to one cup of warm water, and sprayed the clean leaves on the underside, picking and burning the infected ones. Then I removed each plant from the soil it was in, and thoroughly washed in lukewarm water every particle of earth from the roots. I sterilized the pots by boiling them, or treating in a pressure cooker, and baked some new soil in the oven for an hour.

I then planted the Violets in sterilized earth and pots. For one month now no appearance of this disease has shown up, and I feel I have found the control. I advise each and every Violet grower to bake your pots and to sterilize the earth before transplanting a Violet from outside source, for I feel sure this disease came from a greenhouse where I purchased the plants.

Always inspect the underside of the leaves for this disease spot I have described, and it will save you a great deal of grief. It can be carried on your hands from pot to pot and is very contagious.

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